

Harvest Moon Bed & Breakfast
Testimony for the House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee
By Carl Kosko, Vice President
Of Pennsylvania Association of Bed & Breakfast Inns

Good morning Chairman Stern and members of the House Tourism Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the creation of the Pennsylvania Tourism Commission. My name is Carl Kosko, Vice President of the Pennsylvania Association of Bed & Breakfasts Inns. PABBI represents the unique lodging segment throughout the Commonwealth. We have just formed our organization on January 1, 2012. Our membership will cater to Innkeepers needs in regards to operations, education and lobbying efforts. Being a new association, we are excited to be able to reach out to over 900 innkeepers throughout the state according to Trip Advisor.

As is the case with most industries, there is significant competition within our family. That being said, we have learned to work well together. We are all for the most part small "Ma and Pa" type businesses and have realized that in order for us to move forward, we must be able to work together, in unison to achieve a voice in the tourism arena.

To that end, is where I would like to reach out to explain the role of an innkeeper and the importance we have in the tourism field. Although we are small, most of us having an average of five guest rooms in our establishments. Multiply that by the number of inns throughout the state, and you begin to realize that collectively we are near 5000 potential room nights throughout the state. My point is that we as a small business have to cater to these guests. Our guests will want great morning offerings, locally made soaps, fine PA handcrafted furniture, will need to go to find the right restaurant for their dining while here and will need to know exactly where to go to enjoy their day. We in turn must reach out to our local garden shops, local soap makers, area butchers for smoked breakfast meats, PA furniture makers, area restaurants, and the dairy man making fresh cheese and providing great farm fresh produce. During the course of any given week, I have touched on minimum ten different local vendors in my area that help me in making my guests comfortable.

So how does this have anything to do with House Tourism Bill 2056? Well when you consider the fact that we are 900 strong, and we reach out to many within our local area, the economic impact is exponentially significant. We as an industry have supported the state and have garnered tax revenue in many ways.

When you tie it all together, we see the formation of the Pennsylvania

Tourism Commission as an agency that will catapult the tourism industry into an arena it once used to play in. The goal might be to bring it back to one of the top five marketing states for tourism in the country rather than where it currently stands in the 44th position. Here in this position, we could possibly be one of the top travel states in the country offering all travelers something unique. Tourism spending alone accounted for 31.1 billion in revenue during 2009. Tourism means employment; currently we (the whole of tourism) employ nearly 433,000 people throughout the state. If we were to try to make up for the loss in travel and tourism tax revenues which were received in 2009, each PA household would be assessed \$690.00 per year to make up for the loss.

Finally, as a small business man relying on myself to market my business, I ask myself sometimes what I can do to help the state see the significance of state tourism. It is after all the second largest industry in the state next to agriculture. The only thing I can do is offer insight and understanding of my industry. I hope it has been helpful and I certainly welcome any questions you may have.

